



Testimony Reference : HB 2860

Date of Hearing: Feb 8

From: Hawaii Farmers Union United

SUPPORT with AMENDMENTS

Testimony:

The HFUU believes that the small farmer in Hawaii is the majority. According to the USDA Data Sheet for Hawaii, over 99 percent of the farmers in Hawaii are 99 acres. The USDA does not track farms smaller than 1-99 acres. But it is common knowledge that the vast majority of fee simple and leased lands are under 4 acres.

This bill would include embrace the the smaller farmer. Up to the point that it excludes all that make less than \$100,000.

The exclusion rate is ridiculous. The same USDA data sheet puts the range of taxable income in Hawaii between \$34,000 and \$45,000 per year. To require a small farmer to have DOUBLE to THREE times that income as a minimum threshold is be exclusionary!

Data sheets on Hawaii speak to 65% of successful businesses being SMALL business. This bill only speaks to BIG business.

This speaks to a danger that anyone with less than four acres and less than \$100,000 income being declassified as a legitimate farmer.

HFUU suggests an amendment such that the the farmer earns at least the average income for that year via their farming endeavors.

There also needs to be an amendment to all qualification for multi-year crops, sugar is two years, pineapple can be two years, trees can be multiple years. To require every year to have a minimum threshold is not fair to multi-year crops or land improvement. It could take years to build up fallow property to make the income viable.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak for the family farmer in Hawaii.

Glenn Martinez
HFUU President

FYI:

Hawaii Farmer Union United is the largest agriculture organization in the State of Hawaii that represents the small family farmers at the exclusion of GMO and Mega Corporation mono-crop industrial farms. With small family farmers on every island Hawaii Farmers Union is the only Grassroots farm organization where the members have direct voice.

Any testimony given to the Legislature is vetted to the membership. Often the testimony is a blend of opinions voiced directly from membership. We also encourage all individual members to submit testimony directly, particularly where there voice is different then the majority, thus all farmer voices are heard, not just the loudest.